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INFO RUEHFK/AMCONSUL FUKUOKA 7276
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RUEHOK/AMCONSUL OSAKA KOBE 0947
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SUBJECT: TOKYO MEDIA REACTION - TIBET AND CHINA

¶1. LEAD STORIES: Tuesday morning's Asahi front-paged the upcoming summit in Washington between President Bush and South Korean President Lee, predicting that the two are likely to agree on redefining the bilateral alliance so that U.S. troops assigned in South Korea can be deployed overseas beyond that theater and so that Washington will uphold its force commitment to the Korean Peninsula even after a reunification of the two Koreas.

¶2. "Unprecedented Unity Emerging in China" A correspondent for the top-circulation, moderate Yomiuri wrote from Beijing (4/15): "China is facing a worst-case scenario of the mounting international criticism of its crackdown in Tibet having led to the turmoil surrounding the Olympic torch relay. Against this backdrop has emerged an unprecedented level of unity in China fed by nationalism, something that has allowed the Hu administration to maintain a hard line.... Both President Bush's plan to attend the opening ceremony of the Beijing Olympics and Japan's policy of attaching importance to relations with Beijing feed into China's hard-line position. After the unrest in Tibet broke out in protest of Beijing's ethnic and religious policies, sympathy toward the Tibetans mounted around the world.... Unless China takes steps to resolve the situation, it will not have much support for the Olympics."

¶3. "China Playing Hardball in View of Strong Economy" A Beijing-based reporter for the conservative Sankei wrote (4/15): "China has been stepping up its crackdown

on monks in Tibet in order to prevent a recurrence of demonstrations, and it has rejected direct talks with the Dalai Lama. China's strong economic growth of late has enabled it to maintain this hard line. Beijing has concluded that its economic prowess precludes the U.S. and Europe from being able to confront it squarely.... With the U.S. and European countries still suffering from the fallout of the subprime loan crisis in the U.S., China's calculation may be correct."

SCHIEFFER